

"Piece By Piece - Tyre and Sidon!#

Text: Mark 7:27, "But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not right to take ~~xxx~~ the childrens bread, and to cast it unto the dogs."

Scripture: Mark 7:24-30

If you have ever put a jig-saw puzzle together, I am sure that you have looked at the maze of pieces spread before you and wondered how all of that could make something worthwhile. Then, depending how you go about it, the puzzle soon takes on meaning and eventually ~~xxx~~ ends up as a picture of some kind. Generally, we take all of the pieces that make up the border of the picture, and when the border is completed we will begin ~~xxx~~ to work on the rest.

All of the events that took place in the life of Jesus made me think that His life resembled a huge jig-saw puzzle. When we read the Gospel accounts of the events of his life, it all seems so jumbled up, and it appears to have no real purpose or reason. Yet, if we pick up each piece of the accounts and we look them over very carefully, scrutinizing how they will fit and mesh into each other, we can see that each one fits into the next, and the next, until finally, we have the completed picture.

Thus, for our Lenten thinking this year, let us visualize some of the events in the life of Jesus, as a part of a large jig-saw puzzle. And let us fit them into place each Wednesday, and Sunday and during Holy Week, and see what the finished puzzle looks like.

Tonight we are looking at the odd shaped piece called "Tyre and Sidon." ~~xx~~
~~xxxxxx~~ For our thinking we are going to look at some of the places Jesus visited and stopped at, but we are also going to look at the events that took place while there, and from all of this, we will have a better perspective of His life, and its meaning and purpose.

We read in our Scripture tonight that Jesus went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. This same incident is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, but in either of them does it give any more specific information other than he went to Tyre and Sidon. Now this is very general information, since if we were to look it up on a map or read about these two places, we would find

that Tyre ~~was~~ is a minor town called SUR, and it has about 6000 inhabitants. In the time of Jesus ~~during the writing of~~ it was an island, and ~~was~~ it is situated about 25 miles south of Sidon. Or, Sidon is about 25 miles north of Tyre, whichever way you may want to say it. Sidon today is called SAIDA and has about 50,000 inhabitants.

Thus it is very difficult to know just exactly where Jesus went when we are told He went to Tyre and Sidon. But one thing we do know, and that is ~~the~~ both cities were ~~ancient~~ Phoenician cities. Jesus, literally went to the Gentiles, which was rather symbolic at this point. Thus, it isn't surprising at the events which later transpire in our Scripture.

We are also led to believe that Jesus went to this area to have a little privacy, but as we read, "He could not be hidden." This is rather significant when we stop to realize that He was never allowed to be completely alone, except when He went to Gethsemane and prayed. It seemed that no matter where he went He was in demand. People sought His advice, His comfort, and His company wherever He went. But always, Jesus was helpful and gentle and kind. We read of a woman who had a daughter with a demon in her, and when she heard that Jesus was there, came and fell at His feet.

We are told the woman was first a Greek, meaning a Gentile, and then to make it doubly obvious, a Syrophoenician, (by nation), again meaning a very definite Gentile.

The little conversation that passes between Jesus and the woman is rather amusing. When we analyse it we can see the byplay of words and meanings that took place between them. Matthew elaborates on this story a little bit and explains some of it away, by stating that Jesus explained to His disciples that He could not help the woman, because He was come to help the lost people of Israel. But Mark merely states what Jesus said directly to her. The woman first asks Him if He will cast the demon out of her daughter. Jesus replies that the children must first be filled, for it is not right to take the childrens bread and cast it to the dogs. Now when we completely understand what is being said, we can interpret this several ways. First we could say that Jesus is insulting the woman in the worst way. The children referred

to in this verse would naturally be the Jews, and the dogs would be the Gentiles which is what the Jews called them, til. But dogs was also a name the Greeks gave to a shameless woman. So if Jesus was wanting to insult this woman, He was doing a good job of it by first telling her that He was only sent to feed the Jewish people, and that what was meant as food for the Jews, was not to be wasted on a shameless Greek. But if we read this verse as it was intended to be read, we see that Jesus is probably just ~~having a little~~ injecting a little humor in what was a very serious situation.

Here was a woman who was all concerned and worried about her little girl. What might kind of mother is not worried when one of her children is ill? So she comes to this Jew, falling at His feet and begging Him to help her. This would take an awful lot of nerve, for a Greek to beg a Jew to help her. Jesus, probably being aware that His fame has reached this completely Gentile area, jokingly reminds her that He is to feed only the Children, meaning slyly the Jews. Yet, He knows, and she knows that He is not doing this at this particular time. He is reminding her of how the Jews thought of Gentiles, and looking for her reaction in this situation. She could very easily have accepted His insults, and walked away. Or, she could accept these sly remarks as being a little humor in her rather drab life, as a means to see how she really feels. And the woman is equal to the occasion for she answers, "Yes, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the childrens crumbs." She goes along with his humor and wit, but adds to it that even though the dogs are not deliberately being fed, the children let some of their food slip to the floor for the dogs. And for her sense of humor, as well as her strong faith, Jesus heals her daughter by proxy.

Since this is Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of Lent, and since we will shortly celebrate the Lord's Supper, I think it is rather significant that we see in the opening Scripture for Lent, that Jesus is feeding someone. His life was spent feeding and nurturing His sheep, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. And the very end of His life, we know that He instituted the Lord's Supper at

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Scripture: Mark 7:24-30

Jig-saw/maze pieces/how worthwhile?
all takes shape/ends up picture
Js life like this/jumbled up no purp or reason
Pick pieces/put together/mesh/fit & complete pic
4 Lent this yr C events life Js as jig-saw puzz
Will fit Wed./Sun & see at end what look like

~~2nite look Tyre & Sidon~~

Will look not only places Js visit/but events as well
2nite look Tyre & Sidon

red in scrip Js went in 2 borders T. & S.
Also record in Mt, but neither give mor specific
T & S gen. info & if look map C-T minor town SUR
about 6000 peop liv there
time Js island/it situate 25 mi S of S.
or S. 25 mi N of T. if U prefer
S called SAIDA & 50,000 peop
Thus diffi kno exact where Js went wen go T. & S.
1 thing kno, both cities PHOENICIAN cities
Js literal went Gentiles, which symbolic this pt.
Thus no surprise what transpire later scrip.

We led believe Js want privacy but/"He could not B
He never complete left alone hidden"

ly in Geth. permit B alone
wherever went He in demand/peop bother/pester
But alway Js helpful/gentle/kind/considerate
We read woman come Js/had dotter possessed,
& when herd Js there, came fell at feet
We told woman Gr. mean Gentile,
then she Syrophoenician (by nation) again mean Gen

Convers pass tween Js/woman amusing
byplay words/meanings when analysed
Mt. explain sum this story away, by say Js tell
discips no can help woman, He only help lost peop
Israel.

Mark merely state what Js say direct 2 her
1st ask if cast out demon in dotter?
Js reply children must 1st B filled, not rt take
childrens bred feed 2 dogs

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt

YQ

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA

ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12, 1975

REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
NANCY LINK, ELLEN MASTER - ACOLYTES

HOLY COMMUNION - 7:30 P.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "COME YE BLESSED" WILSON
"COMMUNION" PEARCE

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 51 "ABIDE WITH ME"

*INVOCATION AND CHORAL AMEN

SCRIPTURE: MARK 7: 24-30

*GLORIA PATRI

*EVENING PRAYER AND CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY "SONG WITHOUT WORDS" ASHFORD

SOLD: "I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES" PETERSON - VON MALONEY

SERMON: "PIECE BY PIECE"

"TYRE AND SIDON"

COMMUNION HYMN No. 338 "ACCORDING TO THY GRACIOUS WORD"

*COMMUNION SERVICE - PAGE 32

EXHORTATION - CONFESSION - ABSOLUTION

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

SERAPHIC HYMN

THE INSTITUTION - CHORAL AMEN

AGNUS DEI

HOLY COMMUNION

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING - DOXOLOGY

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 56 "NOW THE DAY IS OVER"

*BENEDICTION AND THREEFOLD AMEN

*POSTLUDE "RETROSPECTION" ASHFORD

----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----

PLEASE FILL OUT A COMMUNION CARD SO THAT OUR CHURCH'S
RECORD WILL BE ACCURATE. IF VISITORS DESIRE TO RECEIVE
CREDIT AT THEIR HOME CHURCH, PUT THE NAME AND ADDRESS
OF EITHER YOUR PASTOR OR YOUR CHURCH ON THE BACK OF
THE CARD AND IT WILL BE FORWARDED.

THE USHERS WILL PASS OUT COMMUNION CARDS AT THE DOOR.

When complete understand wat B said, can interpret 2/
2 ways.

1st could C Js insult woman worst way:

children refer 2 could B Jews,

dogs B Gents, which what Jews call them

So if Js want insult woman, He do good job of it by
tel He want feed Jews only, & not waste on worthless
Greek

But if read as intended B red, we C Js perhaps inject
little humor in situation that serious

Here mother concern 4 little girl who ill,

What mother not concern children ill?

So she comes this Jew/falls at feet/begs 2 help
~~xx this take lot of nerve to Gr. ask Jew 4 help!~~

Js prob aware fame spread 2 this complete Gent area

He jokingly remind her He 2 feed only children,
slyly meaning Jews.

Yet, He kno & she kno He not do this, this partic

He reminding her how Jews thot Gents & look 4 time
her reaction this time & situation

She could easily accept insults & walk away,

Or, she could accept these sly remarks as a bit of
humor in her rather drab life as a means 2 see how
she reacts.

& woman equal to occasion, 4 she answer, vs 28 b

She go along His humor & add 2 it,

" point out tho children fed & dogs not,

yet the children let sum food slip 2 floor for dogs
either intentionally or un-intentionally.

And 4 keen sense humor & strong faith Js heal dotter
Since this Ash Wed & begin of Lent & will celebrate
D's Supper,

it rather signif we C in open Lent Js feed some 1

His life spent feed/nurture sheep

whether Jews or Gents.

At end of life He inst. Last Supper.

He said, "Take eat, this my body, Take drink, blood

Thru out all life even on a rest period,

He willing feed those have need food.

whether Spiritual or Physical foods, no matter

He stand ready feed us 2 nite as we cum 2 His table

Js tell us 6 chap John vss 53-55

This His invitation 2 all His children 2 join Him,
at His table.

Come, let us seek Him in prayer, & then let us join
Him at His table.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.